VII. ALCIBIADES.

Alcibiades eminent both in his virtues and vices, I.—His education, II.—He commands in the expedition against Syracuse; is suspected of profaning the mysteries, and of conspiring against the government, III.—Is recalled home, but flees, and attaches himself to the Lacedæmonians, IV.—Falling under suspicion among them, he flees to the Persians, and is afterwards reconciled to his countrymen, V.—His enthusiastic reception at Athens, VI.—He again becomes unpopular there; his successes in Thrace, VII.—He tries to promote the good of his country, VIII.—He crosses over into Asia, IX.—Is killed in Phrygia, X.—His character, XI.

I. ALCIBIADES, the son of Clinias, was a native of Athens. In him nature seems to have tried what she could do; for it is agreed among all who have written concerning him, that no

* *Librum gravem multis verbis.*] "A heavy letter in many words."

one was ever more remarkable than he, either for vices or virtues. Born in a most distinguished city, of a very high family, and by far the most handsome of all the men of his age, he was qualified for any occupation, and abounded in practical intelligence. He was eminent as a commander by sea and land; he was eloquent, so as to produce the greatest effect by his speeches; for such indeed was the persuasiveness of his looks and language, that in oratory no one was a match for him. He was rich,* and, when occasion required, laborious, patient, liberal, and splendid, no less in his public than in his private life;† he was also affable and courteous, conforming dexterously to circumstances; but, when he had unbent himself, and no reason offered why he should endure the labour of thought, was seen to be luxurious, dissolute, voluptuous, and self-indulgent, so that all wondered there should be such dissimilitude, and so contradictory a nature, in the same man.

II. He was brought up in the house of Pericles (for he is said to have been his step-son),‡ and was taught by Socrates. For his father-in-law he had Hipponicus, the richest man of all that spoke the Greek language; so that, even if he had contrived for himself, he could neither have thought of more advantages, nor have secured greater, than those which fortune or nature had bestowed upon him. At his entrance on manhood he was beloved by many, after the manner of the Greeks, and among them by Socrates, whom Plato mentions in his Symposium; for he introduces Alcibiades, saying that "he had passed the night with Socrates, and had not risen up from him otherwise than a son should rise from a father." When he was of maturer age, he had himself no fewer objects

* *Dives; quum tempus posceret*, &c.] This is Bos's reading. Many editions have *Idem quum tempus*, &c.

† *Non minus in vitâ quàm victu.*] Bos and Bœcler distinguish *vita* and *victus* in this manner; *vita*, they say, means a man's mode of living in public and among other men; *victus* his way of life at home, and diet at his own table. Cicero de Legg. iii. 14: *Nobilium vitâ victuque mutato.*

‡ *Privignus.*] If we believe Diodorus Siculus, lib. xii., and Suidas, Alcibiades was the son of Pericles's sister. Hence Pericles is called his uncle by Val. Max. iii. 1, and Aul. Gell. xv. 17. Pericles appears, however, to have been the step-father of Alcibiades's wife, as Magius observes; for Alcibiades married Hipparete, the daughter of Hipponicus, whose wife Pericles afterwards espoused.—*Bos.*

of affection, his intercourse with whom, as far as was possible he did many acts of an objectionable character, in a delicate and agreeable manner; which acts we would relate, had we not other things to tell of a higher and better nature.

III. In the Peloponnesian war, the Athenians, by his advice and persuasion, declared war against the Syracusans, to conduct which he himself was chosen general. Two colleagues were besides assigned him, Nicias and Lamachus. While the expedition was in preparation, and before the fleet sailed, it happened one night that all the statues of Mercury* that were in the city of Athens were thrown down, except one, which was before the gate of Andocides, and which, in consequence, was afterwards generally called the Mercury of Andocides.† As it appeared that this could not have been done without a strong confederacy of many persons, since it had respect not to a private but to a public matter,‡ great dread was excited among the multitude, lest some sudden tumult should arise in the city to destroy the people's liberty. The suspicion of this seemed chiefly to attach to Alcibiades, because he was considered both more influential, and of higher standing, than any private person; for he had secured many adherents by his generosity, and had made still more his friends by assisting them in legal proceedings. Hence it happened, that as often as he appeared in public, he drew the eyes of all people upon him; nor was any man in the whole city thought equal to him. They accordingly had not only the greatest hope of him, but also the greatest fear, because he was able to do much harm as well as much good. He was sullied also by ill report, for it was said that he celebrated the mysteries§ in his

Omnes Hermæ.] Mercury was reckoned the god of thieves, and therefore they used to erect his statues before their doors by way of prevention against the attempts of robbers and house-breakers.—*Clarke.*

† *Itaque ille postea Mercurius Andocidis vocitatus est.*] This is the reading of Bos and Van Staveren. Many other editions have, instead of these words, *Andocidisque Hermes vocatus est*

‡ *Quod non ad privatam, sed ad publicam rem pertineret.*] A manuscript of Bœcler's has *quæ*, but, as I suppose, from a fancy of the transcriber, who thought that the word must be a pronoun, referring to *consensione*, whereas it is a conjunction, showing the reason why "great dread was excited" by this occurrence "among the multitude," namely, because a union of many in the affair indicated a conspiracy, and must have respect to something of a public nature.—*Bos.*

§ *Mysteria.*] The mysteries of Ceres; the Eleusinian mysteries.

own house, a practice which, according to public opinion among the Athenians, was regarded as impious; and this matter was thought to have reference, not to religion, but to a conspiracy.*

IV. Of this crime he was accused by his enemies in a public assembly of the people. But the time for him to set out to the war was drawing near; and he considering this, and being aware of the habit† of his countrymen, requested that, if they wished anything to be done concerning him, an examination should rather be held upon him while he was present, than that he should be accused in his absence of a crime against which there was a strong public feeling.‡ But his enemies resolved to continue quiet for the present, because they were aware that no hurt could then be done him, and to wait for the time when he should have gone abroad, that they might thus attack him while he was absent. They accordingly did so; for after they supposed that he had reached Sicily, they impeached him, during his absence, of having profaned the sacred rites. In consequence of this affair, a messenger, to desire him to return home to plead his cause, being despatched into Sicily to him by the government, at a time when he had great hopes of managing his province successfully, he yet did not refuse to obey, but went on board a trireme which had been sent to convey him. Arriving in this vessel at Thurii in Italy, and reflecting much with himself on the ungovernable license§ of his countrymen, and their violent feelings towards the aristocracy, and deeming it most advantageous to avoid the impending storm, he secretly withdrew from his guards, and went from thence first to Elis, and afterwards to Thebes. But when he heard that he was condemned to death, his property having been confiscated, and as had been usual, that the priests called Eumolpidæ had been obliged by the people to curse him, and that a copy of the curse, engraven on a stone pillar, had been set up in a public place, in order that the memory of it might be better attested.

* They thought that there was some conspiracy under the cloak of it.

†. *Consuetudinem.*] Knowing the fickle character of the Athenians

‡. *Crimine invidiæ.*] This is evidently the sense. *Crimine invidiæ* for *crimine invidioso.*

§ *Licentiâ.*] The license of the populace, which could scarcely be controlled.

he removed to Lacedæmon. There, as he was accustomed to declare, he carried on a war, not against his country, but against his enemies, because the same persons were enemies to their own city; for though they knew that he could be of the greatest service to the republic, they had expelled him from it, and consulted their own animosity more than the common advantage. By his advice, in consequence, the Lacedæmonians made an alliance with the king of Persia, and afterwards fortified Deceleia in Attica, and having placed a constant garrison there, kept Athens in a state of blockade. By his means, also, they detached Ionia from its alliance with the Athenians, and after this was done, they began to have greatly the advantage in the contest.

V Yet by these proceedings they were not so much rendered friends to Alcibiades, as alienated from him by fear; for when they saw the singular intelligence of this most active-minded man in every way, they were afraid that, being moved by love for his country, he might at some time revolt from them, and return into favour with his countrymen. They therefore determined to seek an opportunity for killing him. But this determination could not long be concealed from Alcibiades; for he was a man of such sagacity that he could not be deceived, especially when he turned his attention to putting himself on his guard. He in consequence betook himself to Tissaphernes, a satrap of King Darius; and having gained a way to an intimate friendship with him, and seeing that the power of the Athenians, from the ill success of their attempts in Sicily, was on the decline, while that of the Lacedæmonians, on the other hand, was increasing, he first of all conferred, through messengers, with Pisander the Athenian commander, who had a force at Samos, and made some mention concerning his return; for Pisander, with the same feelings as Alcibiades, was no friend to the power of the people, but a favourer of the aristocracy. Though deserted by him,* he was received at first, through the agency of Thrasybulus the son of Lycus, by the army, and made commander at Samos; and afterwards, from Theramenes making interest for him, he was recalled by a decree of the people, and, while still absent, was appointed to equal command with

* *Ab hoc destitutus.*] On the contrary, he was, according to Thucydides, viii. 49, 53, supported by Pisander.—*Bos.*

Thrasybulus and Theramenes. Under the influence of these leaders, so great a change in affairs took place, that the Lacedæmonians, who had just before flourished as conquerors, were struck with fear and sued for peace; for they had been defeated in five battles by land, and three by sea, in which they had lost two hundred triremes, that had been captured and had fallen into the possession of their enemies. Alcibiades, with his colleagues, had recovered Ionia, the Hellespont, and many Greek cities besides, situated on the coast of Asia, of which they had taken several by storm, and among them Byzantium. Nor had they attached fewer to their interest by policy, as they had exercised clemency towards those who were taken prisoners; and then, laden with spoil, and having enriched the troops and achieved very great exploits, they returned to Athens.

VI. The whole city having gone down to the Piræeus to meet them, there was such a longing among them all to see Alcibiades, that the multitude flocked to his galley as if he had come alone; for the people were fully persuaded of this, that both their former ill success, and their present good fortune, had happened through his means. They therefore attributed the loss of Sicily, and the victories of the Lacedæmonians, to their own fault, in having banished such a man from the country. Nor did they seem to entertain this opinion without reason; for after Alcibiades had begun to command the army, the enemies could withstand them neither by land nor by sea. As soon as he came out of his ship, though Theramenes and Thrasybulus had commanded in the same enterprises, and came into the Piræeus at the same time with him, yet the people all followed him alone, and (what had never happened before, except in the case of conquerors at Olympia) he was publicly presented with golden and brazen crowns. Such kindness from his countrymen he received with tears, remembering their severity in past times. When he arrived at the city, and an assembly of the people had been called, he addressed them in such a manner, that no one was so unfeeling as not to lament his ill-treatment, and declare himself an enemy to those by whose agency he had been driven from his country, just as if some other people, and not the same people that was then weeping, had sentenced him to

suffer for sacrilege. His property was in consequence made good to him at the public cost, and the same priests, the Eumolpidæ, who had cursed him, were obliged to recal their curses; and the pillars, on which the curse had been written, were thrown into the sea.

VII. This happiness of Alcibiades proved by no means lasting; for after all manner of honours had been decreed him, and the whole management of the state, both at home and in the field, had been committed to him, to be regulated at his sole pleasure, and he had requested that two colleagues, Thrasybulus and Adimantus, should be assigned him (a request which was not refused), proceeding with the fleet to Asia, he fell again under the displeasure of his countrymen, because he did not manage affairs at Cyme* to their wish; for they thought that he could do every thing. Hence it happened that they imputed whatever was done unsuccessfully to his misconduct, saying that he acted either carelessly or treacherously, as it fell out on this occasion, for they alleged that he would not take Cyme, because he had been bribed by the king. We consider, therefore, that their extravagant opinion of his abilities and valour was his chief misfortune; since he was dreaded no less than he was loved, lest, elated by good fortune and great power, he should conceive a desire to become a tyrant. From these feelings it resulted, that they took his commission from him in his absence, and put another commander in his place. When he heard of this proceeding, he would not return home, but betook himself to Pactye,† and there established three fortresses, Borni, Bisanthe, and Neontichos, and having collected a body of troops, was the first man of any Grecian state‡ that penetrated into Thrace, thinking it more glorious to enrich himself with spoils from barbarians than from Greeks In consequence his fame in-

* A considerable town of Æolia But it was at Notium, near Ephesus, not at Cyme, that the affair that caused the unpopularity of Alcibiades took place, through the folly of his lieutenant-general Antiochus, who, during his absence, brought on an engagement with Lysander, contrary to the express orders of Alcibiades.

† A city on the isthmus of the Thracian Chersonese. Most editions, previous to that of Bos, had Perinthus, from a conjecture of Longolius.

‡ *Primus Græciæ civitatis*] He was the first man of Greece that penetrated into that part of Thrace which was free, and where no colonies of Greeks had been established.—*Fischer.*

creased with his power, and he secured to himself a strong alliance with some of the kings of Thrace.

VIII. Yet he could not give up his affection for his country: for when Philocles, the commander of the Athenians, had stationed his fleet at Ægospotamos, and Lysander, the captain of the Lacedæmonians (who was intent upon protracting the war as long as possible, because money was supplied to the Lacedæmonians by the king, while to the exhausted Athenians, on the other hand, nothing was left but their arms and their ships) was not far distant, Alcibiades came to the army of the Athenians, and there, in the presence of the common soldiers, began to assert,* that "if they pleased, he would force Lysander either to fight or beg peace: that the Lacedæmonians were unwilling to engage by sea, because they were stronger in land-forces than in ships; but that it would be easy for him to bring down Seuthes, king of the Thracians, to drive them from the land, and that, when this was done, they would of necessity either come to an engagement with their fleet, or put an end to the war." Philocles, though he saw that this statement was true, would not yet do what was desired, for he knew that he himself, if Alcibiades were restored to the command, would be of no account with the army; and that, if any success resulted, his share in the matter would amount to nothing, while, on the other hand, if any ill-fortune occurred, he alone would be called to account for the miscarriage. Alcibiades, on taking leave of him, said, "As you hinder your country's success, I advise you to keep your sailors' camp near the enemy; for there is danger that, through the insubordination of our men, an opportunity may be afforded to Lysander of cutting off our army." Nor did his apprehension deceive him; for Lysander, having learned from his scouts that the body of the Athenian force was gone on shore to seek for plunder, and that the ships were left almost empty, did not neglect the opportunity of making an attack, and by that single effort put an end to the whole war.

IX. Alcibiades, after the Athenians were defeated, not thinking those parts sufficiently safe for him, concealed himself in the inland parts of Thrace above the Propontis, trusting that his wealth would most easily escape notice there. But he was disappointed; for the Thracians, when

* *Agere.*] In its rhetorical sense, to state, plead, declare.

they learned that he had come with a great sum of money, formed a plot against him, and robbed him of what he had brought, but were unable to secure his person. Perceiving that no place was safe for him in Greece, on account of the power of the Lacedæmonians, he went over into Asia to Pharnabazus, whom he so charmed, indeed, by his courtesy, that no man had a higher place in his favour, for he gave him Grunium, a strong-hold in Phrygia, from which he annually received fifty talents' revenue.

But with this good fortune Alcibiades was not content, nor could endure that Athens, conquered as she was, should continue subject to the Lacedæmonians. He was accordingly bent, with his whole force of thought, on delivering his country, but saw that that object could not be effected without the aid of the king of Persia, and therefore desired that he should be attached to him as a friend; nor did he doubt that he should easily accomplish his wish, if he had but an opportunity for an interview with him; for he knew that his brother Cyrus was secretly preparing war against him, with the aid of the Lacedæmonians, and foresaw that, if he gave him information of this design, he would find great favour at his hands.

X. While he was trying to effect this object, and entreating Pharnabazus that he might be sent to the king, Critias, and the other tyrants of the Athenians, despatched at the same time persons in their confidence into Asia to Lysander, to acquaint him, that, "unless he cut off Alcibiades, none of those arrangements which he had made at Athens would stand; and therefore, if he wished his acts to remain unaltered, he must pursue him to death." The Lacedæmonian, roused by this message, concluded that he must act in a more decided manner with Pharnabazus. He therefore announced to him, that "the relations which the king had formed with the Lacedæmonians would be of no effect, unless he delivered up Alcibiades alive or dead." The satrap could not withstand this menace, and chose rather to violate the claims of humanity than that the king's interest should suffer. He accordingly sent Sysamithres and Bagæus to kill Alcibiades, while he was still in Phrygia, and preparing for his journey to the king. The persons sent gave secret orders to the neighbourhood, in which Alcibiades then was, to put him to death. They, not daring to attack him with the sword, collected wood during

the night round the cottage in which he was sleeping, and set light to it, that they might despatch by fire him whom they despaired of conquering hand to hand.* Alcibiades, having been awakened by the crackling of the flames, snatched up (as his word had been secretly taken away from him) the side-weapon of a friend of his; for there was with him a certain associate from Arcadia, who would never leave him. This man he desired to follow him, and caught up whatever garments he had at hand, and throwing them out upon the fire, passed through the violence of the flames. When the barbarians saw that he had escaped the conflagration, they killed him by discharging darts at him from a distance,† and carried his head to Pharnabazus

A woman, who had been accustomed to live with him, burned his dead body, covered with her own female garments, in the fire of the house which had been prepared to burn him alive. Thus Alcibiades, at the age of about forty, came to his end.

XI. This man, defamed by most writers, three historians of very high authority have extolled with the greatest praises. Thucydides, who was of the same age with him; Theopompus, who was born some time after, and Timæus; the two latter, though much addicted to censure, have, I know not how, concurred in praising him only; for they have related of him what we have stated above, and this besides, that though he was born in Athens, the most splendid of cities, he surpassed all the Athenians in grandeur and magnificence of living, that when, on being banished from thence, he went to Thebes, he so devoted himself to the pursuits of the Thebans, that no man could match him in laborious exercises and vigour of body, for all the Bœotians cultivate corporeal strength more than mental power; that when he was among the Lacedæmonians, in whose estimation the highest virtue is placed in endurance, he so resigned himself to a hardy way of life, that he surpassed all the Lacedæmonians in the frugality of his diet and living; that when he was among the Thracians, who are hard drinkers and given to lewdness, he surpassed them also in

* *Quem manu superari posse diffidebant.*] "Whom they despaired would be able (i.e. whom they expected or thought would be unable) to be overcome by the hand."

† *Eminus.*] Bos would omit this word, as wanting authority.

these practices; that when he came among the Persians, with whom it was the chief praise to hunt hard and live high, he so imitated their mode of life, that they themselves greatly admired him in these respects; and that by such conduct, he occasioned that, with whatever people he was, he was regarded as a leading man, and held in the utmost esteem. But we have said enough of him; let us proceed to speak of others.